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the sturdy Danziger who runs a cargo of timber or corn to the Thames, or the equally hardy collier from Newcastle, who carries a cargo of coals to Stettin, know of the *true* meridian? and yet it is for persons of this class that charts and sailing directions must and ought to be prepared. All finely-dotted outlines of shoals, all small figures and faint impressions of soundings which look pretty in the closet, all *true* meridian compasses and bearings, are but the veriest mockery to the sailor, who, perhaps, in a gale of wind is often obliged to lay off his track by night, probably by the light of a half-trimmed lamp! Charts and sailing directions cannot be too clear, brief, plain, and practical, and such as a sailor in the hour of need may turn to with confidence. And such, we feel assured, will be the sailing directions for the Baltic Sea—a fit companion to the charts before us, and both worthy of the Government under whose fostering care they are published, and an honour to the countrymen of a Ritter and a Humboldt.

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II.—*Report on an Exploration of the Country lying between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains on the line of the Kansas and the Great Platte Rivers.* By Lieut. J. C. Fremont, of the Corps of Topographical Engineers. Washington. Printed by order of the United States' Senate. 1843. Communicated by Thomas Falconer, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn.

THIS survey includes a considerable district between  $39^{\circ}$  and  $43^{\circ}$  N. lat., and  $96^{\circ}$  and  $111^{\circ}$  longitude W. It was undertaken by the order of the Government of the United States, with the ultimate object of erecting forts for the protection of traders across the country lying between the state of Missouri and the Pacific Ocean. The work of the expedition commenced at Choteau's trading-post, on the right bank of the Kansas, and ten miles above its mouth, in long.  $94^{\circ} 39' 16''$  W., and lat.  $39^{\circ} 5' 57''$  N. : the elevation above the sea at this point being 700 feet. The instruments carried,—unfortunately only part of the distance,—were a circle and sextant of Gambey of Paris, a sextant of Troughton, two chronometers and barometers. One of the chronometers became useless; and it is to be regretted that Lieutenant Fremont did not himself occasionally rate the one he carried with him. The rating of a watch-dealer at New York may be perfectly correct, but no traveller wishing to determine correctly the longitude of places by such an instrument could entirely depend on the rate at starting. The survey of Mr. Schomburgk in Guayana is an example to all travellers of attention to accuracy in this respect, and of what they can accomplish, in the midst of great difficulties, by care and habitual correctness. The party were fully under weigh to the west on the 10th of June, 1843, taking

the course of the Kansas river. On the 26th they reached the Platte river, called by the Indians the Nebraska, or shallow river, at the distance of about 328 miles from the mouth of the Kansas:  $99^{\circ} 17' 47''$  long. W., and  $40^{\circ} 41' 06''$  lat., and at an elevation of 2000 feet above the sea. On the 2nd of July they came to the forks of the Platte. The southern stream above the junction is 450 feet wide, and 12 to 20 inches deep, and the northern 2250 feet wide, and somewhat deeper. The breadth of the river below the junction is 5350 feet. At this point the projection of the map which accompanies the journal commences, and is carried to the head-waters of several great rivers which take their rise in the Rocky Mountains. The party proceeded along the south fork to Vrain's Fort, which they reached on the 10th of July. The river at this point was clear, not unlike a mountain stream, and its elevation above the sea 5400 feet. From Vrain's Fort the route was to the N.W., over a sandy district in which *cacti* abounded. The north fork of the Platte was reached at Fort Laramie. Lieutenant Fremont gives some interesting information of the state of the Indian tribes in this part of the country. They appear to be engaged in continual warfare, to be occupied in plundering each other, and to bear a deadly enmity to the whites, whom they do not fail to attack when the opportunity is favourable, and revenge or the desire of plunder excites them; circumstances which greatly contribute to the rapid diminution of their number. The winters at Fort Laramie are remarkably mild for the latitude, but rainy weather is very frequent, and the place is celebrated for strong winds, the prevalent one being W. An E. wind in summer, and a S. wind in winter, bring rain. About 10 miles from the fort they came to the "warm spring," which gushes with considerable noise and force from a fossiliferous limestone rock. In this neighbourhood Lieut. F. recommends the establishment of a fort by which the road to the Oregon would be protected, and the most troublesome Indian tribes kept in check. Here there was a marked change in the country they were traversing: eastward there was an absence of timber, and an immense expanse of prairie—westward the region was sandy and sterile. At the Red Buttes the country presented a remarkably naked appearance. July 30, they visited "Hot Spring Gate," where the Platte passes through a ridge of white and calcareous sandstone. The water of a spring here is almost boiling hot, and gushes from the rock in a fine bold spring about 10 feet above the river (pp. 52, 73). On the 7th of August they reached the "South Pass."

'It is difficult for me,' says Lieut. F., 'to fix positively the breadth of this pass. From the broken ground where it commences at the foot of the Wind River chain, the view to the S.E. is over a champaign

country, broken at the distance of 19 miles by the Table Rock, which, with the other isolated hills in its vicinity, seems to stand on a comparative plain. This I judged to be its termination, the ridge recovering its rugged character with the Table Rock. It in no manner resembles the places to which the term "pass" is commonly applied—nothing of the gorge-like character and winding ascents of the Alleghany passes in the United States—nothing of the Great St. Bernard and Simplon passes in Europe. Approaching it from the mouth of the Sweet Water, a sandy plain, 120 miles long, conducts by a gradual and regular ascent to the summit, about 7000 feet above the sea; and the traveller, without being reminded of any change, suddenly finds himself on the waters which flow to the Pacific Ocean. By the route we had travelled the distance from Fort Laramie is 320 miles, or 950 from the mouth of the Kansas.'

Eight miles from the pass they came to "Little Sandy," one of the tributaries of the Colorado running into the Gulf of California. The barometer was injured, but in an excursion to a point considered to be the most lofty of the Wind River chain, the height was estimated at 13,570 feet above the sea:—

'The day was sunny and bright, but a slight shining mist interfered with our view of the surrounding country. On one side we overlooked innumerable lakes and streams, the spring (sources) of the Colorado of the Gulf of California; and on the other was the Wind River Valley, where were the heads of the Yellow-Stone branch of the Missouri: far to the north we could just discover the snowy heads of the *Trois Tetons*, where were the sources of the Missouri and Columbia rivers; and at the southern extremity of the ridge the peaks were plainly visible among which are some of the springs of the Nebraska or Platte river. Around us the whole scene had one main striking feature, which was that of a terrible convulsion.'

The party endeavoured to return in a boat by the Platte river, but it was too shallow to permit them. They met however with an accident from the force of the current, their boat being upset, and many of their MS. observations lost. At the end of August the Platte river was very low, exhibiting a mere line of water among sand-bars. The island at the junction of the two streams of the Platte, called Grand Island, is 52 miles long, with an average breadth of a mile and three-quarters, and the soil excellent. On the 24th they reached the Loup Fork of the Platte, and forded it where the stream was 430 yards broad; the current being swift and clear, and differing from the Platte in this respect, which is yellow. On the 17th of October they arrived again at St. Louis, Missouri.

The Report is accompanied with a long list of plants, which were collected on the route. The geological information which it contains is very scanty and imperfect. Copies of the original astronomical observations are given, with the results,—a very

meritorious proceeding. The meteorological tables extend over only a part of the journey.

A short period will, no doubt, produce much additional information of these districts; but it cannot be forgotten that all journeys in this part of the world are accompanied with great privations; that the carriage of instruments is painful and laborious; the heat of the climate oppressive; and that a separation from companions, though often unavoidable, is an event of constant danger.

The following are some of the principal points at which Lieut. F. made observations for latitude and longitude, referred to the meridian of Greenwich:—

	Latitude.			Longitude.		
St. Louis, Col. Brant's house . . . . .	38°	37'	34"	90°	15'	55"
Choteau's trading-post . . . . .	39	05	57	94	39	31
Junction of the N. and S. forks of the Platte River . . . . .	41	05	05	101	21	24
St. Vrain's Fort . . . . .	40	22	35	105	45	13
Fort Laramie . . . . .	42	12	10	105	21	10
Highest peak of the Wind River } . . . . .	42	49	49	110	37	25
Mountains, between . . . . . }	42	24	32			
Missouri River—mouth of the River						
Kansas . . . . .	39	06	03	94	32	54

III.—*Commerce of the Prairies, or the Journal of a Santa Fé Trader, during eight Expeditions across the Great Western Prairies, and a Residence of nearly Nine Years in Northern Mexico. Illustrated with Maps and Engravings.* By Josiah Gregg. 2 vols. New York. 1844. Communicated by Thomas Falkoner, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn.

THIS work gives much information respecting Santa Fé and the district of New Mexico in its neighbourhood. The greater portion of it is occupied with particulars of the journeys made over the vast unsettled regions lying between the Mississippi and the Rio Grande del Norte, and of the trade between the United States and New Mexico, but it contains many interesting geographical facts which deserve notice.

Mr. Gregg states, that the only paper found in the archives of Santa Fé giving any information of the settlement of New Mexico, is a memorial of Don Juan de Oñate, a citizen of Zacatecas, dated September 21, 1595. It asks permission of the viceroy to establish a colony on the Rio del Norte, in the country already known by the name of New Mexico. From the memorial it appears that an adventurer, Francisco de Leyva Bonillo, with some followers, had previously entered the province without permission, whom Oñate was authorised to arrest and punish. Mis-